

KELVIN BUECKERT

## Lessons Learned in the Mourning

*A collection of poems and essays about finding hope in the struggle.*

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*First edition*

*This book was professionally typeset on Reedsy.*

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# Welcome



Welcome to this little book of memories.

These essays and poems are personal reflections pulled from my blog. You could say they are the fragments that remained after the fires of challenge and struggle. However, if you get something out of them, perhaps that made the process worthwhile.

Feel free to get in touch if you want to discuss any of these thoughts further.

Kelvin

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# Kelvinator 1



It was a simple box ad. At least, that's how I remember it. A lot of shows have passed through my brain since I saw that ad. Yet, that ad is significant because that ad is what set it all off.

It was an audition notice for *Anne of Green Gables: The Musical*.

Now, it wasn't that I was a big Anne fan. I wasn't a fan at all to be honest. However, since I had dabbled in acting and writing from time to time, it did hold some interest for that reason.

Still, I brushed off its gentle call.

My sister, however, did not. She was the big Anne fan in the family and so was one of my other relatives. My sister was the one most interested in being a

part of this experience though and since she didn't want to attend the audition alone, she put pressure on me and that certain relative to go along.

"Just come along for the company," that's one of the ploys she used to try and persuade me.

I kept on resisting but long story short, we finally agreed to go along. It was a bitterly cold January night and it would be good to have company while traveling you see.

We arrived at the theater and were promptly sent down to the waiting room.

It was pretty crowded down there! Apparently there were a quite a few people in world who appreciated Anne. My nerves were whispering that that there was still time to escape. However, I was there, so I filled out the form I was given and waited reluctantly for my turn to audition.

Finally it was my turn, I walked alone onto a bare stage and the director asked me to sing a song. A song? My goodness. I wasn't much into singing. However, I was standing there on stage, so why not sing a song? Being young and foolish, I said I'd sing Happy Birthday.

So I sang that wonderful song without accompaniment as the producer, director, and a camera captured every classic moment.

With our individual auditions complete, we went back home and waited for the results of our efforts.

It took a few weeks. I had almost convinced myself that I was safe, I hadn't been chosen. Then, came the day when a pair of letters arrived in the mail. They had official looking return addresses on them and they looked pretty important. So, naturally, we opened them as soon as possible.

In an ironic twist, me and my relative had been cast in the production while my sister had not. She was a bit disappointed but she did get a crew position so she was still able to participate in the action.

I was surprised and stressed out as I realized the magnitude of what I had gotten into. Yet, I was in it, so I began practicing...whipping my voice into shape for the months of singing before me. It was a workout I wasn't quite used to...I've attached a bit of a rehearsal order sheet from earlier on in the production.

Indeed I was in way over my head. Most of the other cast and crew were

highly experienced and knew exactly what they were supposed to be doing while I didn't have the slightest idea. However, I didn't want to be left in the dust, so I kept practicing my songs and my lines every single day in an effort to keep up. Eventually the show opened...and we discovered that every performance had been sold out ahead of time.

As the run carried on, the line ups started earlier with every performance. At least that's what we could see from our positions backstage. The shows themselves got standing ovations and rave reviews. It was a thrilling experience. It was something I had never been through before and looking back on it now, I'm pretty sure it changed my life.

It was a tough slog. Our director was kind but very strict. A phrase she gave us during one of her many lectures has stuck in my mind ever since. "You know, people are spending their hard earned money to see you!" She would say, just before she went on to make the point that we as performers shouldn't waste our audience's time and money. Valuable advice! Advice I've been known to give myself these days. Yet even though it had it's tough moments, that production was where I realized that I really was interested in the whole theater experience after all...and after the run of Anne was completed I began wondering if there might be another show out there that I could be a part of...

So, let that be a lesson, your best friend may be the one who pushes you out of your comfort zone and into a whole new world.

Who knows, your best friend might even be your sister.

...to be continued...

# Father



*On the anniversary of the passing of my Father...*

\*\*\*

Dad liked doing things in a big way.

When he started his farming career at an early age with his brothers, they were collecting tadpoles. They ended up with over one hundred frogs. We haven't yet heard if he or the brothers tried eating any of them.



Dad also enjoyed many types of music. He often talked about how he would sing “I Walk the Line” while walking a cranky baby. I was one of those cranky babies. Maybe I still am.

Another of his favorite songs was Red Sovine’s “Daddy’s Girl” which I’m sure my sisters will listen to a bit differently now.

Dad liked traveling and family trips could happen very spontaneously. One of the family highlights was a two-week trip to B.C. His excellent driving skills came into play when we were driving through the mountains without brakes playing Christmas music all the way.

He really enjoyed taking his wife and family along on semi trips as well.

Much of his time in the semi or working on other things but he was always ready for a good game of crokonole. Or...to organize a game of Prisoners Base at a family gathering.

Dad also liked long walks. So much so that we were nervous whenever he would ask if anyone wanted to go for a walk. We had fun with it though. One especially memorable walk was a family trek through the forest that included a bonfire and porcupine sightings.

Family was really important to Dad. He welcomed every new member of the family with open arms. When his grandson came along, he was absolutely thrilled! Myles was his pride and joy. Dad was very much looking forward to the arrival of another grandchild.

Dad used to say “life is too short, you’ve gotta make the best of it.”

He was very passionate about the things he believed in. This included his beloved farm. He could get very frustrated with it...but he refused to give it up. He applied this same determination in the other areas of his life. Many was the time that he shoveled his semi up an Ontario hill during a blizzard.

But as I’m sure we all know, the area of life Dad was most passionate about was his faith and the sharing of his faith. It wasn’t a faith based on a long list of traditions or rules. It was a simple faith that could best be summed up in the phrase. Love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

One of the many ways he shared this faith was by teaching boys in his Sunday School Class for the past 30 years. His teaching wasn’t stranded in the classroom either...he loved to have his class out on the farm to butcher a

cow and then they would deliver the meat to Union Gospel Mission and spend some time working there.

Dad was always eager to help; whether shingling, washing dishes or helping out the package handlers at Fed Ex.

This past summer he was able to take drive a bus down to an Orphanage in Mexico where he also spent some time working. This was a highlight of the year for him.

Dad often acknowledged God's presence and protection during all of his travels. About a week before Dad's passing, he was about to head out a trip when he was locked up in the shed where his semi was parked. It was a very strange incident. Dad remarked after that that if he hadn't been locked in the shed he would've ended up in a 16-truck pile up. Why God didn't lock him up somewhere again we don't know. We may never know. We don't need to. Dad's last words were "I'm okay, I'm okay, worry about the other driver, he's hurt bad." And...based on the faith he had, we know that Dad really is okay. He's in a better place now...and I'm sure he'd like nothing better than to meet us all there someday.

# Father's Day



*He gave me life  
and was always there  
standing in the gap  
of my childish needs  
and fears  
he gave us love  
with powerful arms*

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE MOURNING

*and sturdy shoulders  
to carry the pain of our growing  
family  
then in a flash so sudden  
he was gone  
and the scene of his absence  
filled our tired eyes  
well-watered with sorrow  
then, as the burden he bore  
fell to another generation  
I discovered the true price of his struggle  
how he sacrificed his tomorrow  
for everything we have on this Father's Day  
and I just hope that I can live up to the vision of life  
the picture of love he painted only yesterday*

## A View From the Mountain



I took a deep breath.

Sucking in my drug of choice.

As I exhaled, I could feel my mind expanding. New possibilities, new ideas, shimmered throughout my imagination like a million brilliant stars. I felt peace creeping over me, a deep peace that I had never felt before. Some may call it a spiritual awakening, something written of in ancient books of wisdom. Others may simply call it the moment when I finally found myself...outside,

without my smartphone.

Breathing in fresh cool air, looking out at the expanse of a valley glowing with the natural wonder of a forest teeming with wildlife. Across from where I sat a silver stream flowed down the mountainside, a tiny ribbon bursting into a waterfall as it neared the bottom of the valley. A waterfall pouring life into the lake below as light from a full moon caressed every ripple.

Strangely enough, I wouldn't exchange this experience for yet another evening in a seedy apartment, slumped on a couch infested with bed bugs, smoking up and watching the empty babble streaming from the television.

Sure, going downhill is easier...much easier...but no matter how easy it is, it doesn't get you to a view like this...and let me tell you, what you can see from here is a whole lot better than you'll ever see if you spend your evenings wallowing around with bottom feeders...

So, even though the climb may be difficult right now...keep on struggling...keep on climbing when everyone else is content to remain sitting...I know you can do it...and in the end, it'll be worth it...trust me...

Peace

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE MOURNING





*Where was the peace?*

*when you gave everything  
and were left clutching nothing  
exhausted  
of any divine desire  
the flame that used to linger  
in the ashes of your burned out world*

*Where was the hope?*

*when your character was murdered  
by the spirits of gossip that traveled  
in the black coattails of jealousy  
attacking in the boastful voices that said  
one thing here  
and the opposite there  
laughing, stabbing, even as you were falling  
and yet, maybe your time of greatest need  
was only an opportunity for a far greater glory  
for your hope was always where  
it always is  
way beyond this world and all its trouble  
and yet, maybe your season of trial  
was only to mold you into a priceless pearl  
for your peace was always here  
in that Holy Spirit of comfort  
a breath of life to spite the shadows  
that healing spring bursting out, flowing over  
your barren fields scarred by battle*

# Aunt



Remembering my Aunt Mari whose birthday would have been today. Once she crafted the piece pictured as a Christmas gift for me...a few years later I wrote the following piece in her memory...

\*\*\*

Mari Neuschwander was a hardworking person, a world traveler, a wife, a mother, an aunt, and I'm sure we could all say that she was our friend. If Mari had a motto in life, it may well have been...let's get it done people.

Mari also liked to have fun, especially with her family. Since Mari was my Aunt I'm especially aware of the fun things she liked to do with her nieces and nephews. There were beach trips, annual walks to pick pussy willows at Easter, the camping expedition to Quappelle valley, long and exciting letters from foreign lands, blind-folded taste tests, the hold'em down and tickle 'em fests, she even did our hair. Mari was an expert hair artist. Well, I'd just like to take a moment to clarify a point. She did the hair of my female cousins and her friends. My brother and I were far too cool to bother with our hair. We still are...or so we like to think anyway.

Mari was always very helpful, even with strangers...one day she saw a poor man stranded at the side of the road beside his dead car so she decided to give him a ride to the nearest town, which was opposite to where she was going. However, the nearest crossover to the other lane was behind her. As she loudly expressed her hope that that there weren't any cops around, she drove against the flow of traffic for just a little bit...The thankful man bought her coffee afterwards and he was as it turned out, a cop.

Mari enjoyed her adventures in South America, Australia, Texas, Germany, and even in the wilds of Toronto. After one of her trips, I remember her bringing a copy of the Farming Game over for us to try. It was quite a revelation to us that there could be a fun way to farm. I also seem to remember her telling my Dad a joke that he still pulls out on occasion. Do it with me now.

Spell Chop

Spell Shop.

What do you get when you get to a green light?

If any of you said stop, please turn over your drivers' license to one of the ushers before you leave the building. This is for your own safety. Thank you.

At one time Mari's job required her to drive across Canada, making and selling crafts at various locations. It started annoying Mari when she was always asked out on dates by older men, so she bought herself a wedding band to ward them off...but once in a while a customer who might be a possible suitor would come along, and she would frantically try and pull off those rings under the table...it was a good thing that none of those possible suitors turned out to be the right one.

The right one turned out to be a lot closer to home. His name is Agabus Neuschwander. He and Mari were married on a very snowy November 18th, 1995.

A highlight from the wedding was acting out a segment of Mari's favorite musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*. I wish I could say that I enjoyed the dancing, but my Mennonite side won't let me. Mari enjoyed it though. That was the important thing for us. However, even more important than our little play was the fact that Mari had met Agabus, the love of her life.

As time went on in their marriage, we were introduced to some more special people, namely Zaphhira, Caleb, and Azaria. Mari became busy with her own family, but she still loved to organize and participate in family gatherings. Surprise parties were a favorite. I think everybody got one on their 40th birthday and Mari participated in them all. It would take far too long to go into the details of every one of those parties, but it is safe to say that a lot of fun was had. It wasn't all about fun though. Even when we went through some difficult times we as a family could count on Mari to be there with us. Even if it was only through a phone call or a word of encouragement.

One my more recent memories is of Mari lying in her hospital bed a few months ago. She loved the feeling of having her feet rubbed so she asked me to rub her feet while we talked. It is good practice for you, girls like having their feet rubbed, she told me then. I remember laughing about it, but I do hope to begin studying that thought soon.

The thing is...love is a beautiful thing. It touches people. It is what brought us here today. It is what drove Mari to work as hard as she did for her family, her friends, and even for total strangers. I'm sure if she were to give us any advice today it would be to do the same. Work hard, live life to the fullest, take your opportunities to create beauty in the world where you live and for everyone you meet. Let's get it done people.

## Grandfather 1



I've been busy preparing three books that are set for publication over the next few months. As part of those projects, I've been reviewing my writings over the past few years. Not that I've forgotten, but through this research, I've been taken back. Once again, the intense challenges of the last few years have played back in my mind.

It has been interesting to see that even if you are writing fiction, your circumstances can color the tone of your stories, even the meaning of them in ways beyond what you saw or intended at the time.

I guess you can never see anything so clearly as when you're looking back on it. Wouldn't it be great if the future, the way forward, was as clear?

I suppose that's where faith comes in. Taking that step forward, trusting that God will have something solid beneath the mist for your foot to land on. Then, taking another step and eventually, you look back on the trail and are surprised to see how far you've actually come.

Anyway, one of these circumstances I mentioned previously involved my Grandfather. He is a great man. Once he was full of wisdom and conversation but his wisdom became garbled as he came down with Alzheimer's. As the disease took hold in his mind, he spiraled downward quickly. First there was increasing confusion, then, eventually his wisdom and conversation faded. This all happened over a period of months, creating intense stress for those of us around to deal with it. Which is why it was so good to see Grandfather the other day, sitting there in front of the TV, watching boxing, and laughing like that boxing match was the most hilarious thing he had ever seen. I suppose that goes to show that joy can be found in the most unlikely situations.

\*\*\*

Picked up a book that my Grandfather has wanted for quite some time. His copy went missing about forty or fifty years ago after he borrowed it out to someone. Anyway, I finally found the book at a thrift store. Without thinking much more about it, I gave it to my Grandfather the next time I saw him. He smiled, opened the book and the first thing he saw was his own name written in the inside cover. Needless to say, we were shocked. After all those years, the book had finally found its way back to its rightful owner. What are the odds?

*\*Yes. This is a true story.*

# Hope



*Your path may be painted in silhouettes and rubble  
the aftermath of the blast  
when pain, like a burning needle burst through your comfortable bubble  
and into the wild plains of sorrow you were cast  
like a prodigal  
clutching memories of everything you lost  
just because its all you know*

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE MOURNING

*as your parched lips breathe a whisper, a prayer for rest  
for the hope still flickering in a candle glow  
you are blessed with the task  
of abiding in a stillness that you never knew  
the tremendous cost  
of sacrificing your past to something far beyond you  
the power that guides the stars in their wanderlust  
the ancient word, revealing the only course that can be true  
through the turmoil of an earth cursed with darkness and dust  
as you realize the creator of all things is also watching over you  
and humbled, you can only replace your fear with trust  
with a burning faith, in the fire that makes all things new*



# Differences



We're not all the same and that's a beautiful thing.

Who would want to live in a world populated by clones all doing exactly the same thing in the same way?

Is cloneliness really next to godliness?

If so, why is everyone unique?

When you think about it, you realize that one talent doesn't make someone more important than someone with another talent. It just makes people

different.

You too are unique, you have talent that nobody else has, so why not use it? Why not share it? Maybe you won't have a stadium of people cheering you on, but is that necessary?

Does applause always mean that what you're doing is right?

Let's be honest, the only person we are expected to be is our self. If you won't be yourself, who will? That actor down the street? He's a decent actor but do you really want him to play you? No.

Trust me. You don't want people to play you.

Ahem. Think of it, all we can really do is to do our best with the talents and opportunities we have been given. If nothing comes of it, we can rest in the knowledge that we did what we could with what we have. If there is a harvest, all the better. We can thank the one that gave us whatever talent we possess.

So, why hide that light of yours?

Why listen to those who say you should bury that talent? Why not use that gift you've been given, to give us a gift. Your painting, your singing, your listening, your encouraging, or whatever it is you've been given to do.

What if the piece you've been holding back is the piece of the puzzle we've been missing?

Why not use today to sow some seeds? Who knows, tomorrow you may see that some of those seeds have already started growing.

You'll never know unless you try.

# Seeds



*The beauty you sow  
in sand  
may only seem destined to fail  
those seeds so small  
so frail  
as they fall from your trembling hand  
may seem so futile  
when faced with the force of that faithless wind  
but as the storm begins to boil  
over on the horizon of fear*

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE MOURNING

*and bitter tears fertilize that barren soil  
life is born in the dirt of darkness  
a light dawns in the heart of the hopeless  
and through faith, a solitary flower  
blooms where there was once only emptiness  
through struggle, an entire field is painted in color  
where things once looked dry and colorless  
we see an entire canvas of grace  
growing from the tiny words  
the half forgotten deeds  
planted in love  
...your seeds...*

\*\*\*

Inspirational Quote of the Day.

“Fear casts out love in favor of tradition, self-preservation. However, perfect love is focused beyond itself and casts out fear.”

## Kelvinator 2



## The Kelvinator?

I remember a crew member who used to call me the Kelvinator...why?

“No matter what happens, you still pull through,” were his words...or something to that effect. So I did...for the most part.

The thing about acting is that it is just that...acting...not actually being. So, while there were times when I'd be awake all night and in bed most of the day...and still showing up for the gig in the evening...all I really needed to do was act like things were okay (for a couple of hours anyway.)

While there were times of crisis and tension backstage...one of the more amusing ones being stepping off stage onto a backstage platform with a certain actress..and having the platform collapse under us. All we all needed to do was keep acting like everything was okay (for a couple of hours anyway.)

Anyway, even though my acting was well-received...even though my writing was getting lift off...even though one of my singles was picked up by a European label and distributed all over the world. In reality it became harder and harder to pull off the illusion of the Kelvinator. I was exhausted...and despite all the good things that were happening, I was actually very depressed.

In the back of my mind, I knew something would have to be done about this increasing disconnect between acting and reality...I could say fine speeches but I never really got around to actually doing anything about it.

Still, the day came when it finally all came to a head. I was on the phone with my sister (a nurse), she was concerned about the things I was telling her, told me to talk to somebody right away. I did...and soon some paramedics were over for a visit. Nice enough people...but not the kind of people you want over for a professional visit too often.

It was a pretty big wake up call.

Long story short it was discovered I was only severely burned out...only being a relative term. It took a year to snap out of it...and build up a head of steam again...even then, I was pretty determined to quit acting. However, my sisters kept pushing me to get back in the game...I kept saying no...even some dude named George, who later became my brother-in-law, called me one day to try persuade me to get back in the game and act with him and the group he was with...told him no too actually...quite firmly in fact. I was actually pretty ticked

at them all at the time. In any case...being the ornery people they are they kept at it until I finally agreed to do one show...and only ONE show...strangely that one show was a smash hit, ended up as front page news (the headline is one of the pictures in the album below) and the phone started ringing like crazy...and I haven't been able to quit acting since...but now I am pretty firm about certain on set behaviors and issues...why? Paramedics are fine people...I know some excellent ones...but I'd rather keep them out of my life if possible...besides, doing things properly is way less hassle anyway...

\*Moral of the story. We've all got problems...but do what it takes to deal with them before they deal with you...and once and awhile it's a good idea to listen to your sisters...it might even be okay to listen to your in-laws sometimes...even if they make you mad at first...



## Grandfather 2



A week ago I was walking along the hall of a care home when the phone rang. I answered it, only to be greeted with laughter as the nurse realized that the person she was talking to was standing in front of the nursing station. The laughter subsided with the news that Grandpa needed to be taken to the hospital, immediately. Over the next few days we watched Grandpa fade rapidly. Sunday was a quiet day, yet it was a momentous day, as my grandmother held his hand, as the song, *To the River*, played softly in the



background, my Grandpa took his last breath in this world and passed away into the next. He was well-known for his honesty, faith, and integrity. He encouraged those who knew him to live in the same way...and so, with the moments of his life, he wrote a legacy for himself. A legacy worth reading after he left this world behind. His wish would be that we all would all find the faith and hope that he found.

## A Flower in the Garden of the King

A FLOWER IN THE GARDEN OF THE KING



*It is easy to see the dirt  
and curse its lack of worth  
but courage is seen in the tender stem peeking  
through the mud that gave it birth  
It is considered normal to rage at the storm  
among the lost souls bearing the mark of Cain  
but strength is seen in the plant that rises  
fueled by the lashing rain  
It is considered honorable to say an ugly thing  
which is why so many of these things are said  
but ugly words cannot change the truth of spring  
the power of the sun, melting away the bleak midwinter  
revealing you in all your natural beauty  
a flower, bursting into splendor  
refreshed in the wonder of his grace  
a summons to the garden of the king  
the center of his affection  
and no one but you can stop you from taking your place...*

\*\*\*

Inspirational Quote of the Day.

“You may feel worthless, but the truth is, you have worth. You may feel hopeless, but the truth is, there is hope. You may feel like a mistake, but the truth is far greater than any feelings that we may have. The truth is, you are beautiful and valuable in the sight of God.”

## Grandfather 3



Abram, “Abe”, Elias was born on June 26, 1925.

As he grew up he experienced many challenges.

For one thing, he had eight brothers and four sisters which made for a pretty crowded house.

Another thing was the hours of chores that he put in as his family struggled to keep their farm alive.

It was hard.

They aren't called the dirty thirties for nothing.

Due to a lack of money in his family, Abe was required to share a bed with his young brothers. As Abe told it, this was not as enjoyable as one might think.

As Abe grew older, there came that fateful day that comes to many a young man. The day when a beautiful young woman catches your imagination and you just know that you have to do something about it. Abe was no exception. He had seen Mary around the village near his family farm and the day came that he knew that he just had to try and win her over. After a determined courtship, which included a memorable evening spent beside a local pond being serenaded by frogs, he married Mary Fehr on Oct 14, 1951. Their marriage was blessed with four children, Kathy, Betty, Jake (Connie), Bill (Karen) as well as fifteen grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren.

As an adult, Abe spent seventeen years working in and running a store, until eventually, at the age of 49, he decided to take on the new challenge of a dairy farm. The farm had its own set of challenges, yet Abe also found the time to work the garden with his wife and daughters. There were days when he was even seen tinkering on a go cart with his two sons. It may not have been the best cart, but it was a cart, and man, it did go...for awhile anyway. At 64, instead of retiring, Abe took on another new challenge. The one of working with disabled people. Even after he officially retired, he was always busy puttering around the house, fixing something, doing odd jobs. Honestly, some of those little jobs were pretty odd. There was really nothing that Abe would not attempt to fix and you know, most of the time he would even be able to get that broken item working again.

Abe wasn't all about work though.

He loved to read.

If he saw something with words on it, he would be sure to pick it up and read it.

The evenings he spent singing together with his wife, Mary, are memories that she will always treasure.

Family gatherings were also very important to him. He sure enjoyed spending time at a table loaded with good food discussing life, politics, and most importantly, his faith.

Abe was a young man when he began listening to the broadcasts of Back to the Bible. As Abe listened to these broadcasts, he began to realize that he needed something more in his life than the traditions he had always known, he needed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As Abe was heard to say, "I realized that I needed to set those other things aside and just stick with what the Bible says." Abe's relationship with Christ became his passion for the rest of his life and he actively shared his faith with family and friends. He was a strong prayer warrior for his family. It was a rare day indeed that was not begun with a time of Bible reading and prayer. Throughout his life Abe was also actively involved in the Church in various roles.

Due to the onset of Alzheimer's disease, Abe spent the last two years of his life at a care home. The family would like to express their appreciation for the quality care that he received from the staff of Gladstone Hospital, Douglas Campbell Lodge, and Portage Hospital.

Abe was predeceased by three sisters and six brothers, a grandchild and son-in-law. He was loved by his family and friends and will be dearly missed, but we rejoice that he has finally arrived in his eternal home and will live eternally in the presence of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

# Visions



*Some days  
are tangled in the grey  
shrouds of mourning  
and I am visited by visions  
of those who exchanged the drab clothing of Earth  
for the technicolor streets of Heaven  
Through the storm*



## VISIONS

*of this pleasant sorrow  
I see them still, living  
like a candle flame surrounded by snow fall  
portraits, shuffling  
like Polaroids through the hands of an impatient uncle  
at that family gathering that left me, breaking  
beaten down by the gaiety of the simple  
laughing and eating  
with an ease that blesses the forgetful  
Yet, with time comes changing  
I must face the visions melting  
away through the power of the sun  
leaving me with nothing  
but hallways that echo lonely  
asking, what have I become  
by remembering  
someone consumed by melancholy  
or someone still standing  
grasping the diamond of their memory  
lurching forward, staggering  
inspired by the good they used to be*

# Grief



Grief arrives in a flood of tears and the residue of pain lasts longer than many people can truly appreciate.

Depressions and addictions can lurk like vampires in someone's head, sucking at their soul and draining away any desire to carry on. Yet, many people think the solution to this is to declare victory over it or to simply pretend that evil doesn't exist...but the tragedy of deception, including self deception, is that it only denies an unpleasant reality. It doesn't change reality, and

ultimately, self deception just keeps you a prisoner of that dark reality. True freedom can only come after you acknowledge reality.

The reality of the pain, the sin, the anger, the trouble you have created for yourself and others in your efforts to escape reality. When you finally face up to the reality of what you really are, helpless...powerless over the addictions, the pain, the grief, the sin.

Let's face it, the reality is, you just can't do this alone any longer, you need a community of support around you. You need a strength that comes from outside yourself to raise you up, to put you back together again.

As a wise man once said, the truth will set you free. Why not acknowledge it and reach out for help today?

True freedom, true change is a lot closer than you think. It'll be hard, perhaps the hardest thing you've ever done, but you'll never regret it.

\*\*\*

In the storm you lose a lot, more than you expect.

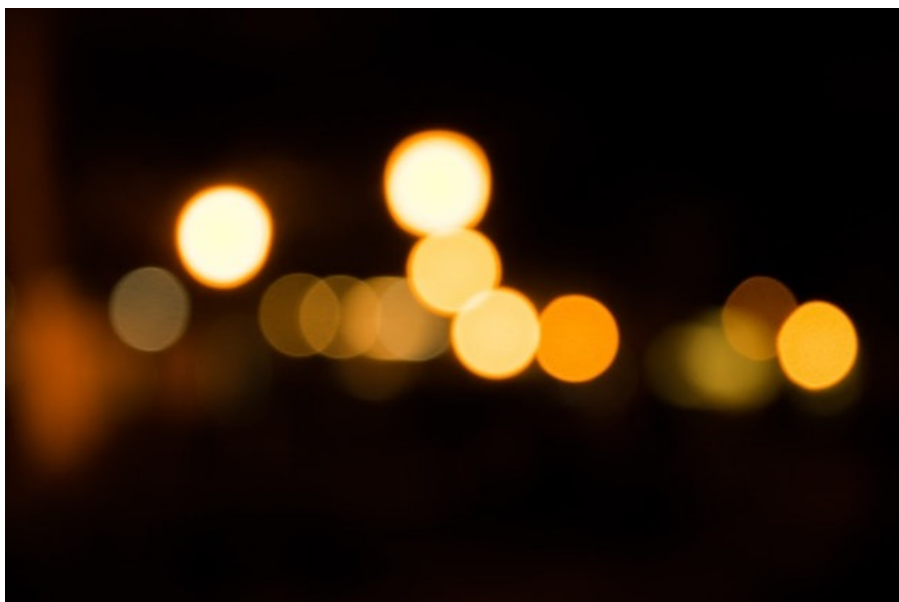
You find out that a lot of lightweight people don't want to stick around when things get heavy.

You find that a lot of people know how to talk theory but don't know how to deal with reality.

However, through the storm you find more empathy for others...through it all you are forced to evaluate what exactly you are investing time in and the returns on that investment.

In the end you come to appreciate the golden people who have survived the fire with you.

# Golden



*After being broken  
the fragile ore  
reveals gleaming threads  
running through it  
promising traits  
that can only be spun golden*

*through the fury of the furnace  
and the clatter of the foundry  
that strips away all uncertainty  
the worthless remains of what used to be  
leaving behind only the things of integrity  
how strange to witness this mystery  
as a pile of shattered rubble  
becomes a river of priceless metal  
how strange to experience the desire  
of a soul set free  
to shine through the struggle  
showing its true mettle  
even within the ordeal of fire*

## Kelvinator 3



Been performing onstage in *Memories of Our Town*, Gladstone...you can see a picture from that above. Also participated in the launch of Manitoba 150 and the The Mobile Stage Co. You can read my speech below. (I varied it a bit live, but this is what I wrote in the first place.)

“Trouble in Red River!”

“Donald Smith, longtime Hudson Bay employee, sent from Ottawa to speak to rebels!” The tension of rebellion threatened to explode into full blown war at any moment. Yet, through this turmoil Louis Riel and the Metis people

brought a new province into the Canadian confederation. However, without rights to it's own natural resources, could this new province survive? Without access to the railway, would it be possible for anyone to create a life on the harsh prairie? As if the struggle of setting up a homestead wasn't enough, Alvin and Louise also had to deal with the challenge of raising a growing family...and believe me, it was a challenge. Their children, Sean and Peter, were brothers in name, but rivals in just about everything else. Just when it seemed that these two young men would finally be able to find peace with each other, Sidney, a beautiful young woman, caught the eye of them both and unleashed another round of conflict. Could people so opposite ever learn to work together for a common goal? Would a province with so little ever be able to fulfill the grand vision of its founders? Join us as we take a look back at where we came from. Through the eyes of a young family coming of age, we will experience the coming of the transCanada railway, the taming of the Canadian West and the birth of Manitoba as we know it today.

\*\*\*

Our Manitoba. An original play that travels 150 years of history with a sense of humor, heart, and ultimately, hope.

\*\*\*

Good evening, for those unfortunate few who don't know me, my name is Kelvin Bueckert. What you just heard was the story of an upcoming play called, Our Manitoba. Some of you may remember the show called Our Town, Austin that was performed here in town a few years ago as part of the Canada 150 celebrations.

This play is a follow up to that.

The show is set to be performed on this stage I'm standing on right now. The plan is for it to be a kick off to a whole weekend of celebrating the great province that we live in. Which means I could use a few talented people!

Some of you may be thinking, well, Kelvin what can I do? My answer to you would be, more than you think!

I'm pretty sure that everyone has at least one talent. For some people it's farming, for others it's singing or acting, some of our Mennonite friends have a talent for making veranatie...I don't know about you, but I'm sure thankful

for those people.

When you think about it, a talent is a bit like a candle. You can cover a candle up so that nobody ever sees it. You can never use the candle at all because you are afraid of what people who like living in darkness might think of you. But I think we can all agree that the most useful candle is the one that shares it's light with the world around it.

It is the same with talents. Whenever we use the good things we have been given for the good of someone else, the world us gets a little brighter.

The punchline to all this is, if you'd like to participate in the upcoming production, there are parts available to suit all ages and skill levels.

If you'd rather work behind the scenes, or if you have a story that I should be be sure to include in the script, you can participate that way as well. I can write a script, but without a good cast and crew to make things happen those words will just stay there on the paper. So, if you have any questions at all, or if you're ready to sign up, please come and see me after the ribbon cutting. Thank you.

Watch video from this by going to the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk2t3Dvghv4>



Return



*Even as the night takes its darkest turn  
somewhere unseen*

## RETURN

*the sun continues to burn  
yes, it won't be long before the black bleeds into gray  
the most color drains away just before the dawning  
in the moment before the sun returns and reclaims the day...*

# Drive



*After all that has been lost  
and the pictures have faded  
as a reminder*

*After all that has been left  
except the road going onward  
into summer*

## DRIVE

*drive*

*remember the past  
but don't live there*

*remember your loss  
as a sign of the love you gave*

*remember your present  
as another opportunity to give*

*just drive*

## Stories From Our Town

STORIES FROM OUR TOWN

# Kelvin Bueckert



## Stories From Our Town

**Tales of Life on the Canadian Prairie**

# Kelvinism



# Kelvinism

A man in a white shirt is seen from the back, pointing his right hand forward. The background is a blurred office environment with several other people working at desks with laptops.

Forward thinking for a  
world going backward!

Kelvin Bueckert

# Christmas in Our Town

## A Priceless Christmas

One Christmas Eve, the same letter arrived at the homes of two complete strangers. Both letters gave directions to one million dollars in cash. Why were the letters sent? Who sent them? These were some of the questions that would be answered once the truth was finally revealed. In the end, two strangers would discover the true gift of Christmas. But at what cost? This edition also includes three other heartwarming stories of miracles during Christmastime.

## A Stormy Season

Happy Holidays? It sure didn't seem like it! Melissa, a rich young socialite, was struggling to deal with the fact of her Grandfather's Alzheimer's. She was fighting her family to keep Grandfather in the care that he so desperately needed. Larry, an amateur auctioneer, was about to lose his home. He was desperately scrambling to earn some extra income in order to stay in the little town that he loved. As a violent Canadian blizzard raged around them, the situations for these two young people intensified. How would they solve their two very different problems? The answer came as a surprise to everyone. Including themselves. How did they do it?

Christmas in Our Town

Kelvin Bueckert

## Christmas in Our Town

Stories of Holiday Romance and Mystery

Kelvin Bueckert